



Eight General Hands; SA version. Updated winter 2015/6

Y1 VBlue #10 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 1
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

<p>West</p> <p>♠ KT53</p> <p>♥ J9532</p> <p>♦ J2</p> <p>♣ K8</p>		<p>East</p> <p>♠ J742</p> <p>♥ T</p> <p>♦ T9763</p> <p>♣ QJ6</p>
<p>North</p> <p>♠ A86</p> <p>♥ A8764</p> <p>♦ AK</p> <p>♣ A75</p>		
<p>South</p> <p>♠ Q9</p> <p>♥ KQ</p> <p>♦ Q854</p> <p>♣ T9432</p>		

Here are eight general practice hands on the themes that we have been looking at in VuBridge. They are in no particular order, just enjoy them as they come...

Here, on Hand 1, we start off with an interesting play problem.

Suit **blockages** can be a pain in the neck as you can often find yourself stranded in the wrong hand.

To avoid ignominy you need to plan a few tricks ahead so you know where you will be and when.

West	North	East	South
-	1♥	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ 3

Bidding.

Partner opens 1♥ on the North cards and we have little option but to respond 1NT (showing 6-9 points with no Heart fit). North raises that to 3NT with 19 points.

Play.

West decides to lead the ♠3 (he has been put off a Heart lead by the bidding) and we first apply our **Count** and **Plan** principle.

With eight top tricks in sight (one Spade, three Hearts, three Diamonds and a Club) we can see that a ninth trick needs to be established.

Here is where we say "Thank you, West", albeit *sotto voce*, because the low Spade lead establishes our ninth trick immediately. We allow the lead to come around to our Queen, nor caring whether East wins the ♠K or if West has it. Either way we'd have two Spade tricks. As it is, Her Majesty takes trick one over East's ♠J.

The hand is not over yet, though. Those eight top tricks we counted earlier are awkwardly placed, that is: the ♥K Q and the ♦A K are *blocking* their respective suits.

This deal therefore requires us to *unblock* those honors in the right order so we can safely cash our nine top tricks.

After winning the ♠Q we must first unblock the ♦A K because we need to free up the ♦Q so we can cash it sometime.

We then come back to the closed hand and play off the ♥K Q. Whilst still in hand we cash the ♦Q and play a Club (a Spade is equally as good) to dummy to cash the remaining tricks on the table.

Nine tricks come from two Spades, three Hearts, three Diamonds and a Club.


Take note that if we unblocked the ♥K Q before the ♦A K we would no longer be able to reach the ♦Q. That's because the only source of entries is the Hearts. With the ♥K Q gone it

would be bye-bye to the ♦Q.



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Y1 VBlue #10 General Hands SA	Contract: 4S
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 2
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North		East	
♠ KJ75		♠ 863	
♥ 62		♥ K73	
♦ A65		♦ QJ9	
♣ 9854		♣ QJ73	
West		East	
♠		♠ 863	
♥ QJT85		♥ K73	
♦ T8432		♦ QJ9	
♣ AT6		♣ QJ73	
South			
♠ AQT942			
♥ A94			
♦ K7			
♣ K2			

The advantage of a suit contract (as opposed to No-trumps) is that you can generate extra tricks by ruffing losers in the *short trump hand*.

This deal exemplifies the principle.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	1♠
P	2♠	P	3♠
P	4♠	P	P
P			

Lead: ♥ Q

Bidding.

After opening 1♠, partner raises to 2♠, leaving us a little in limbo-land. We are too weak to bid game directly and too strong to Pass, so we decide to test the water with a game try of 3♠.

This *invitational bid* asks partner to bid on with a maximum or Pass with a minimum. Holding 8 points, four trumps and an outside Ace, North is delighted to carry on to 4♠.

Play.

Against 4♠ West leads the ♥Q from his sequence.

A quick count of **losers** indicates that we have two Heart losers and two possible Club losers (that depends on who has the ♣A). If we count **winners** we can see six Spade tricks, one Heart trick, and two Diamond tricks for a total of nine easy tricks.

One possible way to obtain the tenth trick is to play East for the ♣A. That is, by playing a Club off dummy towards the ♣K, we will score a Club trick whenever East has the ♣A.

There is, however, a much simpler line. The doubleton Heart in dummy cries out for a Heart ruff. If we could manage to ruff a Heart in dummy (the *short trump hand*, note), we'd score an additional trump trick.

This is the easiest way to go about obtaining the contract-making tenth trick so, on the ♥Q lead, we take the Ace, draw trumps (in three rounds) and concede a Heart. This paves the way for a ruff on table.

The defense play a Diamond but we take the ♦K and ruff the Heart loser. Now, with the contract assured, we are free to try for a Club trick.

If the Club play succeeded (if East had the ♣A) we'd make an overtrick. As it is, with two Club losers, it's 4♠ making on the nose. The ten tricks come from **seven** Spades, the ♥A and the ♦A K.

Note that ruffing a Diamond in hand is a waste of time. We would not make any more than six Spade tricks that way – the same number as if we simply ran the trumps off. Extra tricks only come from trumping in the short trump hand.



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VB#10 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 3
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West ♠ T973 ♥ QT72 ♦ JT2 ♣ QT		East ♠ A4 ♥ J95 ♦ 9763 ♣ K972
North ♠ QJ862 ♥ K8 ♦ KQ4 ♣ 854		
South ♠ K5 ♥ A643 ♦ A85 ♣ AJ63		

This deal requires some attention in the entries department.

Can you manage to be where you want to be, when you want to be?

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1NT
P	3♠	P	3NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ 2

Bidding.

Much trodden ground, this one.

We open 1NT and partner looks for an eight (or nine) card major fit by jumping to 3♠. Unable to offer any support, we retreat to 3NT and that ends the auction.

Play.

West leads the ♥2 and we already have our first critical decision. Should we win in hand or in dummy?

We can count six top tricks (two Hearts, three Diamonds, one Club) so we need three more to come from the Spade suit. With the ♦K Q on table as entries it doesn't really matter where we win the Heart lead but it is best practice to keep entries in the hand with the long suit.

So we win the opening lead with the ♥A and lead the ♠K. Unsurprisingly (and annoyingly), the opponents duck this trick but, no matter, we continue with a Spade to dummy's ♠J, which East wins to fire back a Heart.

Dummy wins the trick and we lay down the ♠Q hoping for a 3-3 break, East irritatingly discarding a low Diamond. This shouldn't discourage us, though, because we can still give up a Spade to West in order to set up a long Spade.


We may be wary of giving up the lead to West but analysis of the opening lead should be reassuring. West led the ♥2, remember, meaning that he should not have a five-card Heart suit. If West is honest the opponents can only cash two Heart tricks and, with their two Spade tricks, that's all the defense will ever get.

Nine tricks come from three Spades, two Heart, three Diamonds and one Club.



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Y1 VBlue #10 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: West	Board #: 4
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

North			
♠ A52			
♥ KJT32			
♦ 96			
♣ T32			
West		East	
♠ T3		♠ KQ9	
♥ Q75		♥ A8	
♦ K753		♦ QT82	
♣ AJ76		♣ KQ84	
South			
♠ J8764			
♥ 964			
♦ AJ4			
♣ 95			

Some deals need you, as a defender, to be "active" in that you are setting up suits, grabbing the lead and taking your tricks.

Some deals need a more pragmatic approach. Such as sitting on your chair and not giving anything away...

West	North	East	South
P	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

Lead: ♠ 6

Bidding.

A rapid and eminently correct sequence of 1NT – 3NT by East-West.

Play.

Against 3NT we lead the ♠6 (fourth-best) to partner's ♠A, and the ♠5 is returned to declarer's ♠K.

A smart piece of deduction shows that East still has the ♠Q. If North had ♠A Q × he'd have led back the ♠Q at trick two. With ♠A Q × × he'd have led back his fourth-highest, and that pesky ♠2 is missing... so North cannot have started with ♠A Q 5 2.

When declarer leads a small Diamond towards the table we have no reason to play the ♦A "on air". We **can** grab Aces against 3NT but only when we have a long suit to run. Here, that isn't the case (the Spades are not winners – yet) so we must content ourselves with the ♦4.

We are rewarded for our virtue when dummy's ♦K holds and, short of tricks, declarer returns to the well and plays another Diamond. We are able to take this with the ♦J and hammer away at Spades, finally setting up our suit.

Observe what would happen were we to grab the ♦A prematurely – declarer would play low from dummy, regain the lead with the ♠Q and be able to cash three Diamond tricks. Four Clubs, three Diamonds, one Heart and two Spades would net ten tricks for declarer. Ouch!

As it is, East is stymied. He can run off four Clubs (we can pitch worthless Hearts on those) and then has to play another Diamond. **Now** we take the Ace and can cash the long Spades for one off.

All done by **not** grabbing tricks...

In defense, it is usually right to observe the rule *second hand low* when declarer is leading towards dummy's honor(s). Here, by playing low on the first round of Diamonds, we allow declarer to score the ♦K but we get so much more in return.



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VB#10 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 1N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: North	Board #: 5
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West ♠ 9642 ♥ JT9842 ♦ KT ♣ K		East ♠ A83 ♥ 753 ♦ QJ3 ♣ AJT4
North ♠ KQJ75 ♥ K6 ♦ A74 ♣ 872		
South ♠ T ♥ AQ ♦ 98652 ♣ Q9653		

A simple 1NT contract can be tricky to play.

Often the points are split evenly between North-South and East-West and there is a struggle for the decisive seventh trick.

West	North	East	South
-	1♠	P	1NT
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ J

Bidding.

North opens 1♠ and we have little choice but to respond 1NT with our 8 points and 5-5-2-1 shape and hope the sun shines. Slightly surprisingly, 1NT ends the auction...

Play.

West leads the ♥J and partner puts down a decent dummy. However, it is unwelcome to see that the ♥A K Q are worth just two tricks between them. Nonetheless, with the fine Spade suit we can see that the ♠10 in the closed hand becomes a useful "filler" card.

The first hurdle comes as we decide in which hand to win the Heart trick. Since we need to set up partner's Spades it is prudent to win the opening lead in the closed hand with the Ace of Hearts, preserving the ♥K as a later entry to dummy's Spades.

After winning the ♥A our next task is to set up the Spades by leading the ♠10. We might hope that one of the defenders would take the ♠A on the first round and leave the ♠K Q J as winners. Of course, the stubborn defenders do no such thing and withhold the ♠A [sigh]. No matter, we cross over to dummy to lead the ♠K to force out the ♠A. Our other red-suit entry will be the card to collect the remaining Spades (assuming they split 4-3).

This leads to the next question. After the ♠10 holds, do we cross over to dummy with a Heart or a Diamond?

Well, it is much better to cross over with the ♦A because when an opponent takes the ♠A he may well return a Heart to force out the ♥K. Not only that, though, opening up the Diamond suit may only give the opponents two or three tricks there (depending on the break) but opening the Heart suit will definitely give them at least three tricks in that suit.

On this deal, after we cross over to dummy with a Diamond and knock out the ♠A, the defense is helpless and can't stop us recording seven tricks. Those seven tricks are four Spades (since the suit splits 4-3) two Hearts and the ♦A. After that we have nothing; East-West can fight

over the scraps.



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VB#10 Y1 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: East	Board #: 6
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West ♠ KJ952 ♥ 53 ♦ Q983 ♣ 83		East ♠ T3 ♥ JT72 ♦ KJT ♣ K972
North ♠ A64 ♥ KQ984 ♦ A76 ♣ AJ		South ♠ Q87 ♥ A6 ♦ 542 ♣ QT654

This deal may be harder than usual. Well, you enjoy a challenge, don't you?

When there are two suits that offer trick-development chances the art is to combine *both* options if possible.

West	North	East	South
-	-	P	P
P	1♥	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Lead: ♠ 5

Bidding.

Partner opens 1♥ and we are obliged to respond 1NT with a 5·3·3·2 8-pointer. North, a trifle optimistically, jumps straight to 3NT with his 18-point hand.

Play.

West leads the ♠5 (an unlucky lead for his side) and as we apply the **Count**, we first see six *top tricks*. Since the opening lead sets up a trick for our ♠Q, regardless of the location of the ♠K, we have a second Spade trick, so that swells the total to seven top tricks.

As we construct a **Plan** we can see that additional tricks can be established in Hearts or in Clubs.

If Hearts split 3-3 then two extra tricks will be generated from the suit, enough for the contract. Alternatively, if the opponents grab their ♠K on the second round of Clubs, then three (or four) Club tricks will be established, also enough for the contract.

So what should we opt for?

The answer is that we should try to play *both* suits. That is: rather than putting all our eggs in one basket we should aim to try one suit and then the other.

Since the ♥A is the one and only entry to the closed hand it is best to keep it and start on the Club suit. If you start on Hearts, and they do not break 3-3, we wouldn't be able to set up and reach the Clubs with the ♥A entry absent.

So... after winning the opening lead with the ♠Q, we play a Club to the Ace and then play the ♣J, hoping that someone takes it with the King. If the defenders were to take the ♠K we'd have at least three Club tricks (probably four) and be in Easy Street.

As it is, the defenders do not take the ♠K, leaving the lead on table. Well, we have a second Club trick in the bank so it's time for a

rethink and a recount. With eight top tricks we change tack by switching attention to the Heart suit where we can set up the ninth trick.

We play off the ♥A K Q (if they break 3-3 it's all too easy) and follow up by giving up the fourth Heart when they split 4-2. This way we set up dummy's fifth Heart, with two Aces as entries to reach it. Ultimately we take two Spades, four Hearts, one Diamond, and two Clubs.

Can you now see how important it is to play on Clubs before Hearts? The ♥A would have proved a vital entry had the opponents taken the ♣K on the second round of Clubs. So we had them on toast whether they took the ♣K or didn't take it.

Heads you win, tails they lose...



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Y1 VBlue #10 General Hands SA	Contract: 2S
Date: 24/03/2016	By: South
Dealer: South	Board #: 7
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West ♠ T96 ♥ AKT5 ♦ QT64 ♣ A5		East ♠ A2 ♥ 9432 ♦ K92 ♣ JT92
North ♠ J3 ♥ J876 ♦ 873 ♣ KQ73		
South ♠ KQ8754 ♥ Q ♦ AJ5 ♣ 864		

This deal is less of a struggle than the last two (we think).

Don't take it too easy, however, because that is when your eye will be off the ball.

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♠
P	1NT	P	2♠
P	P	P	

Lead: ♥ A

Bidding.

We open 1♠ and partner gives us some bad news with a 1NT response (6 to 9 points and something approaching a balanced hand. Maybe).

With a 6-3-3-1 shape and a loathing of No-trumps we retreat to 2♠, hoping for something useful in dummy.

Play.

West leads the ♥A and partner does put down something useful. (Let's face it, for a 1NT response, a 4-4-3-2 dummy with 7 points is one whole lot better than it might have been).

The **Count** and **Plan** reveals three top losers in the form of Aces in Spades, Hearts, and Clubs; there are also three potential losers in Diamonds and Clubs. Counting winners we see that a 3-2 trump break would allow five Spade winners, the ♦A is a certain trick and there is a certain but slow Club trick. That's seven winners, anyway.

After West wins the ♥A, he switches to a Diamond to East's King and our Ace. We, of course, start to draw trumps by playing small to dummy's ♠J and East's ♠A.

The defense cash two Diamonds and West gets off lead with a trump. We pull the last trump from the defense and now have to hold the Club losers to one. (Or make two Club winners – it amounts to the same thing).

We should realize that we must play Clubs from the closed hand so we can lead towards the Club honors in dummy. If East could kill the ♠K or ♠Q with the ♠A we'd have no chance of making two Club tricks. If, on the other hand, we can make West play the ♠A "on air" then we will succeed.

West plays low on the first round of Clubs, allowing the ♠Q to score. No problem. We ruff a Heart to hand and play another Club and West is forced to play his Ace on our ♠6 (and doesn't he look annoyed about it!)

Note that had we started Clubs from dummy by leading out a top honor West would have captured it with his Ace and we would have lost two Club tricks.



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Y1 VBlue #10 General Hands SA	Contract: 3N
Date: 24/03/2016	By: East
Dealer: West	Board #: 8
Play this hand online!	Vulnerable: None

West ♠ A62 ♥ J ♦ 86542 ♣ KQ75		East ♠ K74 ♥ AK9 ♦ KQ7 ♣ J632
North ♠ 953 ♥ QT832 ♦ AJT3 ♣ 4		
South ♠ QJT8 ♥ 7654 ♦ 9 ♣ AT98		

Another deal, another defensive play.

Should you be rushing around, desperately trying to find your side's source of tricks?

Or should you be sitting with your feet up, a spectator to declarer's problems?

West	North	East	South
P	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

Lead: ♠ Q

Bidding.

We see a rapid 1NT – 3NT auction by East and West.

With a 5·4·3·1 hand West isn't exactly well-suited to No-trumps but with 10 points, length in the minors and a poor main suit what decent alternative does he have but a raise to the No-trump game?

Play.

We lead the ♠Q against 3NT and it fetches low cards from all three players. Maybe declarer played a low card by mistake but, regardless of the reason, we continue with a Spade, which declarer takes in hand with the ♠K.

At trick three, declarer leads a low Club from hand and we play the...?

In similar vein to Hand 4 of this series, we should follow the "rule" of *second hand low* when defending. Nothing can be gained by rushing in with the ♠A. **Where's the fire?**

So we play low, allowing dummy's ♣K to score, and a low Diamond is played from the table to declarer's ♦Q, with partner also abiding by the principle of *second hand low*.

Determined, declarer tries another low Club from hand. Is it time to hop up with the ♠A just yet?

No! We should strain every sinew **not** to put Aces on low cards. They are designed to kill honors, not collect Twos, Threes and Fours.

If declarer holds the ♠J (as he does here) then by grabbing the ♠A we would allow him three winners. Look what happens when we play another low Club – declarer calls for dummy's ♣Q as partner discards.

The Club position now looks like this:

North ♣ None	
West ♣ 7 5	East ♣ J 6

South
♣ A 10

Although declarer has collected two Club tricks, our ♣A 10 is now sitting over declarer's ♣J 6 and he can't play Clubs again – otherwise we take two Club tricks.

Declarer now plays a Diamond to his King (as partner plays low again) but he has no way to come to nine tricks. The ♦K is the fifth trick, the ♠A is the sixth trick, the ♥A K are a seventh and an eighth. The ninth trick, though, just doesn't materialize. The two 4-1 breaks are fatal to East's cause.

All done by sitting quietly in a chair and being patient.